



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
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News Release

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Board will Discuss Report on Diseases from Exotic Pets

Wed., Oct. 6, 8:45 a.m.–4:45 p.m., Wenatchee Conference Center, 201 N Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee

Could your exotic pet make you sick? Last year's monkeypox outbreak reminded everyone that importing exotic animals can mean importing diseases that jump from pets to humans. Monkeypox is just one example of "zoonotic diseases"—human illnesses that originate in animals. Others include SARS, West Nile virus and possibly AIDS. Some, like salmonella, are known to be transmitted by pets.

At its all-day meeting at the Wenatchee Conference Center on October 6, the State Board of Health will consider whether to approve a draft report on zoonotic disease and pets. A second draft report under consideration examines ways to involve local communities in identifying and addressing environmental health issues. The Board will also talk about the reasons public health require providers, hospital and laboratories to report certain conditions, and it will continue its discussion of ways to ensure that septic systems along shorelines do not contaminate marine waters. From 3:45 to 4:45 pm, the Board will hold an executive session on personnel matters.

The zoonotics report—a collaborative effort by the Board, the Department of Health and local health jurisdictions—examines what public health can and should do to prevent and control diseases that might be spread by exotic pets. It recommends that the state develop a zoonotic disease response plan, update currently rules on rabies and psittacosis, give further consideration to requiring the animals dealers and pet stores provide education materials to people who purchase some types of pets, and develop stronger relationships with veterinarians, animal dealers, exotic pet animals, animal right groups and others.

Copies of the agenda, presentations, reports and related materials are available on the Web at <http://www.sboh.wa.gov/>. The press contact number for the Board during the meeting is (360) 701-2398.

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The State Board of Health serves the citizens of Washington by working to understand and prevent disease across the entire population. Established in 1889 by the State Constitution, the Board provides leadership by suggesting public health policies and actions, by regulating certain activities, and by providing a public forum. The governor appoints ten members who fill three-year terms. Visit the board's Web site at www.sboh.wa.gov.